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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a new degree option for the M.A. in French that was developed in response to declining graduate enrollment and complaints that the traditional study of literature is not relevant to future teachers at the high school and junior college level. The program fits into existing rules for the M.A. in literature and was based on existing courses. The rules remain flexible enough for the student to concentrate on either historical or applied linguistics. Students adopting this option must take five of the eight courses in language and linguistics, write a thesis on a linguistic topic, and pass an oral exam on a reading list. The written description of the program given to all incoming graduate students and the reading list are attached as appendices. It is hoped that this report will serve as a model for other institutions wishing to diversify their options. (Author/AMH)

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Creating Student Options for Graduate Instruction in French at the University of Georgia

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Creating Student Options for Graduate Instruction in French at the University of Georgia

Graduate departments of foreign languages across the nation are faced with the same problem. Declining enrollment at the undergraduate level has led to a reduction of teaching positions and consequently a loss of interest in graduate school. Departments at major universities, which were once very selective with applicants at the M.A. level, are now finding it difficult to attract enough competent students to fill quotas for class enrollment and teaching assistantships. Schools are now competing to entice the reduced number of applicants.

The Department of Romance Languages at the University of Georgia started meeting this challenge in 1977. The Graduate Coordinator developed a campaign to publicize the graduate program through mailings and personal contacts at other institutions. It was also decided that a more diverse program of graduate study would be an effective means of attracting more students at the M.A. level. In the past all M.A. exams in French were based on literature. This practically forced students into taking most of their courses in this field. However, the majority of graduate students in the department plan to enter the teaching profession immediately rather than continue on for the Ph.D. Several students complained that the course of study in literature was not a preparation for the realities of teaching on the high school or junior college level.

With this in mind the department decided in early 1978 to create a new degree option. There were two serious limitations which had to be considered; no new faculty could be hired, and the degree could not be a new one. The latter problem existed because it would be difficult to justify to the deans a new degree in light of declining enrollment. Also, we were looking for an immediate remedy, while instituting a new degree can take two years or more.

It was finally decided that the linguistics courses the

department offered could be worked into a coherent program as an option for the M.A. degree in French. The department offers courses in Old French, history of the language, paleography, French grammar, phonetics, and applied linguistics. The only problem to be worked out was the development of a program which would make sense as a study of French linguistics yet still fit into the framework of rules for the M.A. in literature. Basic requirements for the latter state forty quarter hours of course work including fifteen at the 800 (seminar) level, reading knowledge of another language, a thesis, and an oral exam over a reading list.

In the end it proved fairly easy to fit the new option into the existing degree. The first rule of the linguistics program stipulates that of the forty hours, twenty-five must be in language and linguistics. Since the literature requirements do not specify particular courses, then linguistics cannot. This is particularly helpful to the students, who can now concentrate in the historical area or the applied. The rule concerning fifteen quarter hours at the 800 level remains the same.

The language requirement was also kept the same: reading knowledge of another foreign language. Once again this flexibility is important to students with different interests. German or Latin would be best for historical linguistics while those interested in applied might opt for a second Romance language.

The thesis requirement is also the same. No minimum page length was adopted because works in linguistics are generally shorter than those in literature. It should be noted that students who complained about literature not being relevant to teaching can now work in the classroom as a part of some thesis topics in applied linguistics.

The reading list was not a sine qua non. It was adopted because it brings the program together as a unit. Also, some students may be ineligible for courses if they took them as an undergraduate at the University of Georgia. The list (attached, Appendix B), is an overview of the field of French linguistics and the courses this department offers.

The program described above was developed in a few weeks and can serve as a model for other departments wishing to create options for students. A written description (attached, Appendix A) is now distributed to all new graduate students and in the future will be a part of the department's nationwide publicity campaign. It is too early to tell whether enrollments will increase noticeably because of the new option, but we feel we are now meeting the needs of students--and future teachers--more actively.

Appendices

A. Program Description

B. Reading List

M.A. in French (Linguistics Option)

Students preparing a master's degree in French have the possibility of working in linguistics rather than in literature. The general Graduate School requirements are the same for both degrees. However, the department has defined the new option in the following terms:

1. Of the eight courses, five must be in language and linguistics. As with literature, any course taken at the 500 level cannot be repeated at the 700 level.
2. A reading knowledge of another language.
3. The thesis must be on a linguistics topic.
4. The candidate will be examined on the linguistics reading list (attached).

As with other degrees, the program of study must meet with approval of the student's committee. Interested persons are encouraged to talk with any of the faculty teaching graduate French linguistics courses.

Department of Romance Languages
The University of Georgia

Master of Arts in French (Linguistics Option)
Reading List

I. General Linguistics

Martinet, André. A Functional View of Language. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962.

II. Historical Linguistics

1. Elcock, W.D. The Romance Languages. London: Faber and Faber, 1960.
2. von Wartburg, Walter. Evolution et structure de la langue française. Fifth Edition. Berne: Francke, 1958.
3. Dauzat, Albert, Jean Dubois, and Henri Mitterand. "Introduction" to Nouveau dictionnaire étymologique. Paris: Larousse, 1964, pp. v - xxvii.
4. Delbouille, Maurice. "Comment naquit la langue française" in Phonétique et linguistique romanes: Mélanges offerts à M. Georges Straka. Vol. 1. Strasbourg: Société de linguistique romane, 1970, pp. 187-199.
5. Dubois, Jean, et al. "Le Mouvement général du vocabulaire français de 1949 à 1960 d'après un dictionnaire d'usage." Le Français moderne, 28 (1960), 86-106, 196-210.
6. Ullman, Berthold L. Ancient Writing and Its Influence. New York: Longmans, 1932.
7. Du Bellay, Joachim. Défense et illustration de la langue française.
8. Primary Sources

"Les Serments de Strasbourg"
"La cantilène de Ste. Eulalie"
Conon de Béthune. "Mout me semont. . ."

III. Phonetics

1. Malmberg, Bertil. La Phonétique. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1978.

2. Martinet, André, and Henriette Walter. "Introduction" to Dictionnaire de la prononciation française dans son usage réel. Paris: France-Expansion, 1973, pp. 13-36.

3. Monod, Pierre A.R. "French Vowels vs. English Vowels." French Review, 45 (1971): 88-95.

4. Valdman, Albert, "The Loi de Position as a Pedagogical Norm," in Papers in Linguistics and Phonetics to the Memory of Pierre Delattre. Ed. Albert Valdman. The Hague: Mouton, 1972, pp. 473-485.

5. Léon, Pierre R. "Etude de la prononciation du "e" accentué chez un groupe de jeunes Parisiens," in Papers in Linguistics and Phonetics to the Memory of Pierre Delattre. Ed. Albert Valdman. The Hague: Mouton, 1972, pp. 317-327.

6. Jenkins, Fred. "The Phonetic Value of Mute-e." French Review, 45 (1971): 82-87.

7. Delattre, Pierre. "Les modes phonétiques du français." French Review, 27 (1953): 59-63.

IV. Applied French Linguistics

1. Valdman, Albert. Introduction to French Phonology and Morphology. Rowley, MA: Newbury House, 1976.

2. Diller, Karl C. Generative Grammar, Structural Linguistics, and Language Teaching. Rowley, MA: Newbury House, 1971.

3. Johansson, Stig. "Uses of Error Analysis and Contrastive Analysis." English Language Teaching Journal, 29 (1975): 246-253, 330-336.

4. Buteau, Magdelhayne F. "Students' Errors and the Learning of French as a Second Language. A Pilot Study." IRAL, 8 (1970): 133-145.

5. Tarone, Elaine, Merrill Swain, and Ann Fathman. "Some Limitations to the Classroom Applications of Current Second Language Acquisition Research." TESOL Quarterly, 10 (1976): 19-32.

V. Methods of Teaching

1. Rivers, Wilga. A Practical Guide to the Teaching of French. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975.

2. Valette, Rebecca. Modern Language Testing. Second Edition. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovitch, 1977.

3. Seelye, H. Ned. Teaching Culture. Strategies for Foreign Language Educators. Skokie, IL: National Textbook Co., 1975.

4. Grittner, Frank. "Why Should Americans Study a Foreign Language?" (chap. 2) in Teaching Foreign Languages. Second Edition. New York: Harper and Row, 1977, pp. 25-45.